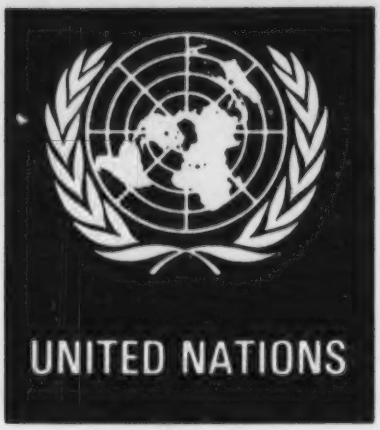

DIVISION FOR
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

SIXTH UNITED NATIONS EUROPEAN NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Palais des Nations, Geneva
24-25 August 1992

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Sixth United Nations European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 24 and 25 August 1992. The Symposium was convened in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991.

2. The Symposium was attended by 99 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 52 of them as observers. It was also attended by several observers from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations bodies. (See annex II below.)

3. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; H.E. Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; H.E. Mr. Victor H. Batiouk (Ukraine) and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

4. The programme of the Symposium was formulated by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in consultation with the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP). Its theme was "Working for Peace - European Coordination".

Two plenary meetings were held as follows:

(a) At plenary I, "The responsibilities of European governmental and non-governmental bodies towards the Palestinian people", presentations were made by the following experts: Mr. Radwan Abu Ayyash (Palestinian); Mrs. Maria Gazi (Greece); Mr. Meir Pail (Israel) and Mr. Roger Stott (United Kingdom).

(b) At plenary II, "Report by ECCP members on their Committee's activities during the period August 1991 to August 1992", reports on two ongoing projects were heard, namely "Olive Trees" and "Palestinian Family Reunification". They were made by Mr. Hans Nebel (Denmark) and Mrs. Blandine Destremeau (France).

5. Two workshops were held on the following topics:

(a) Lobbying of Governments and Parliamentarians;

(b) Raising of public awareness of the Palestine issue by European NGOs.

6. The Symposium adopted a Declaration, as well as proposals emanating from the workshops. (See annexes I and II below.)

I. OPENING MEETING

7. Opening the meeting, H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that the Committee believed that the patient work carried out by the United Nations, with the invaluable support of the NGO community, had played a part in the recent positive developments with regard to the question of Palestine.

8. Since 1976, in accordance with the mandate given to it by the General Assembly, the Committee had sought to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestine question based on the attainment of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right to self-determination and independence,

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in accordance with the principles established by the General Assembly and reaffirmed most recently by the Assembly in its resolution 46/75 of 11 December 1991. While it had not been possible thus far to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices, as proposed by the General Assembly, the Committee had welcomed the convening of the Conference sponsored by the United States of America and the former Soviet Union, for the achievement of a comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

9. The Madrid Conference had shown that the question of Palestine was the core issue that needed to be addressed in efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and that the Palestinian people, through its recognized representatives, was a principal party in any negotiating process in this regard. There was an urgent need for measures to diffuse the continuing tension and violence in the region, which was exacerbated by the dynamic of occupation and repression and the growing danger of extremism.

10. The Committee had repeatedly called for the restoration of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Palestinians living in the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, and for enforcement of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The confiscation of land and the building of settlements, the use of firearms to deal with demonstrations, the curfews, the use of deportations and collective punishment and the fetters imposed on the economic development of the occupied territory must cease in order to ensure equity for Palestinians and create a climate in which a meaningful peace process could move forward. The Committee hoped that the new Government in Israel would take the necessary measures in this regard.

11. The fact that talks were in progress between the parties and outside of the United Nations framework, did not detract in any way from Israel's obligations to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention and to abide by the Security Council resolutions. In 1991, Israel had also ratified the Human Rights Covenants and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which imposed upon it clear international obligations with regard to respect for human rights.

12. Mr. Nabil Ramlawi, Permanent Observer of Palestine at Geneva, said that peace was the fundamental aspiration of the Palestinian people and that it would be a solution to the problems of the region, if it was based on justice and international legitimacy. Peace meant, first, the elimination of foreign occupation without any condition attached and the possibility for the people in the occupied territory to recover its inalienable rights, namely the right to self-determination without any interference from the outside. Only that way would the Palestinian people be able to establish an independent State on its national territory. Establishing such a peace was the task facing the people of the world, especially the people of Europe.

13. The Symposium was a step taken by the people and countries of Europe along the road to recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The need to develop the European position was vital for the achievement of a just and lasting peace. The situation of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories was deteriorating day by day.

14. Mr. Bernard Mills, Chairman of ECCP, emphasized that many changes had taken place since the previous Symposium, which had been held under the dark clouds which still hung over the Palestinians in the aftermath of the Kuwait crisis. Despite highs and lows in Israeli/Palestinian relations, the old mould had been broken and after Madrid, the status quo ante could never be returned to. The Gulf war and its aftermath had forced the Western powers to recognize that the Israeli/Palestinian dispute had to be resolved. There were several reasons for Israel's change of Government other than the pragmatic self-interest of many Israelis, not least of which was the average Israeli's war weariness with the intifadah and the continual need to serve six to eight weeks a year in the army to enforce its repression. With the ending of Mr. Shamir's Government, the prospects for a just peace and Middle East stability had improved. Although the new Israeli Government might provide the opportunity for a real breakthrough in the peace process, all had to continue being vigilant and press for confidence-building measures.

15. The new ECCP had, since its nomination, with the support of friendly European NGOs, established an office at Brussels, and had been registered with the Belgian Government as an international non-profit NGO. It had established a strong partnership with the network of European NGOs in the occupied territories (NENGOOT). Various actions had been taken by ECCP. Despite the change of Government, Israel's policy had not changed. The policy of settlements in the occupied territories, as well as the acts of aggression and the various violations of human rights continued to be carried out. The loan guarantees had been granted without any indication of a cessation in the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories. Although that decision had been taken as a result of the election campaign in the United States, it was a dangerous threat to the entire negotiation process. ECCP had sent appeals to various European and international bodies, and individual NGOs had been encouraged to lobby their respective national Governments and members of parliament on behalf of the Palestinians.

16. Together with NENGOOT, the Symposium had made a funding proposal to the European Community, which had been accepted, to hold a development conference on the occupied Palestinian territories from 28 September to 1 October 1992, at which there would be workshops on health, education, social services, agriculture, the economy and existing infrastructure - all sectors which must be handed over to the Palestinians under any workable interim agreement.

II. PANEL DISCUSSION

Plenary I: The responsibilities of European governmental and non-governmental bodies towards the Palestinian people"

17. Mr. Meir Pail (Israel), Member of B'Tselem, Israeli Human Rights Center, stated that he was not representing the Israeli Government, nor the B'Tselem organization. He was, rather, representing a kind of "dovish" consensus in Israel that the Palestinians had the right to self-determination and to establish a Palestinian State alongside Israel, basically in the West Bank and Gaza.

18. A military government automatically practised discrimination and this was the case for Israel. Regarding the measures taken against Palestinians, Mr. Pail said that discrimination in employment and the demolition of houses were measures applied following the old British colonial pattern. Because of the continuous state of war with most of the Arab world, many discriminatory measures were being applied against Palestinians and Israeli Arabs in many sectors, including health, education, social services, etc. For example, the Palestinians from East Jerusalem were treated as if they were inhabitants of the occupied territories, despite the fact that officially they were Israeli citizens.

19. The real issue to address at present was the establishment of Palestinian autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza, leading to the creation of a new system with substantial changes in the social, legislative, economic and political system.

One of the difficulties to solve would be how to define the authority of the administrative system which managed the autonomy. Would it be allowed to create a police force, to exercise jurisdictional authority, to apply legal force? Another question to address would be how to define a unified legal system, since at present Egyptian legislation was applied in Gaza, while in the West Bank, Jordanian law was still in force.

20. A possible role Europeans could play would be to support the Palestinians in establishing their autonomy, particularly by helping them to establish a modern political system and by providing technological and economic assistance in order to build a solid autonomy, with a strong economic and social basis for an independent state.

21. Mr. Radwan Abu Ayyash (Palestinian), journalist, head of the Palestinian Social Consolidation Forum and Coordinator of the local committee of NGOs in the occupied Palestinian territory, said that the historical, political and economic relationship between the Middle East and Europe was strong enough so as to allow Europe to have a greater role for the sake of peace and justice. The Middle East was not segregated from Europe and was even considered to be part of Europe. The security and stability of Europe was deeply related to the security and stability of the Middle East.

22. The spirit of the Venice and Madrid Declarations had not been translated into actions, especially at a crucial time, and Europe had to bear its responsibilities and commitments in a more visible manner. Although Europe had played a role in human rights issues and on the economic level, a greater role in these matters was needed in the light of violations of human rights committed against Palestinians and the continuing destruction of Palestinian infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza.

23. Europe's major role was at the current time in the political arena, especially after the United States had agreed to provide the loan guarantees to Israel while Israel's settlement policy was still in effect. The Palestinians had shown great flexibility regarding the peace process, but they faced a rigid policy and attitude by Israel. Even after the election of a new Israeli Government, they were still facing almost the same old formulas and old positions. Peace could be advanced functionally if there was a clear-cut role for international legitimacy and that was where Europe could play a major role.

24. He called on the Europeans to strengthen their political and economic support. Palestinians needed funding for a broad-based economic development programme that would aim at providing a framework for a sound social and economic foundation which would help the Palestinian people achieve self-reliance.

25. Mr. Roger Stott (United Kingdom), Member of Parliament, said that since the opening session of the Peace Conference on the Middle East at Madrid in October 1991, there had been a tangible deterioration in the physical security of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territories, with an increase in serious human rights violations. These serious violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention caused threats to the peace process.

26. Over the past few years, and recently in the context of the diplomatic peace process, the British parliamentarians had been pressing their Government on human rights violations occurring daily in the West Bank and Gaza, with the object of ensuring that human rights concerns were placed at the centre of any negotiated formula for peace.

27. Now more than ever, the role of European States in support of those efforts for peace had to be guided by the imperative to press Israel to abide by the minimum standards of behaviour in its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza laid down in the British Parliament.

28. To illustrate how European Governments could fulfil their commitment to the principles of international law, he drew the participants' attention to the issue of the assertion of consular jurisdiction by States members of the European Community with consulates at Jerusalem. International law stipulated that protected persons living under occupation should have a protecting power to ensure that their rights in law were being respected on the ground. There was no such protecting power in the occupied territories; therefore, it fell to the other Contracting Parties to fulfil this function. A number of States members of the European Community had consulates at Jerusalem and were, therefore, well placed to exercise this jurisdiction through their consular officials. While European countries should do what they could to help reduce tension in the Middle East, they should not neglect the protection of Palestinian civilians living under occupation. The new Israeli Government would change the situation only with a sustained effort by European Governments to ensure the basic security and protection of Palestinian civilians up to the time that the occupation ended and a just and durable peace settlement was achieved.

29. Mrs. Maria Gazi (Greece), Vice-Chairman, ECCP, said that during the year since the last meeting, two important events had occurred which had changed the environment of NGO activities: the initiation of the peace negotiations at Madrid and the defeat of the Likud Government in Israeli elections. But, the repression of the Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation forces continued, despite the fact that the talks were going on. The peace process initiated at Madrid was not based on the whole logic and legality norms behind the United Nations resolutions for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, nor was it the result of a mutual agreement among all parties directly concerned as an appropriate way for the achievement of a comprehensive and viable peace in the region. Nevertheless, political realism required that the process should be considered a breakthrough.

30. A just and lasting peace in the area could be achieved only on the basis of respect for and adherence to the universally accepted principles and rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. For the Palestine question, in particular, it was imperative that this breakthrough be strengthened through the implementation of all relevant international conventions and standards, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the regulations annexed to the Hague Convention IV of 1907.

31. In this context lay the responsibilities of European governmental and non-governmental bodies towards the Palestinian people.

32. Mrs. Gazi stressed that, in her opinion, European governmental bodies were required to ensure that the signatures of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention were duly honoured, to secure Israel's respect for its obligations under that Convention and to support the Palestinian interim self-government arrangements proposed in March by the Palestinian side in the bilateral negotiations.

33. The role of European NGOs was to make appropriate approaches to the competent European governmental or intergovernmental bodies for the convening of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention and to press individual European Governments and the European Community to stop providing Israel with economic and other assistance. NGOs could also play a substantial role in articulating the concern of peoples to Governments and intergovernmental bodies. The development of the Palestinian society and its economy should be seen as an integral part of the right to self-determination and vice versa.

34. Whether the peace talks were progressing or not, the Palestinian people needed protection. The Security Council was responsible for the provision of such protection in the context of its responsibility under Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. A decision to station an observer force in the occupied Palestinian territory would be consistent with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Plenary II: Report by ECCP members on their Committee's activities during the period August 1991 to August 1992

35. Mr. Hans Nebel (Denmark), Danish Palestinian Friendship Association, gave a detailed account of the olive trees project in the occupied territory. The farmers in the occupied territories planted olive trees to prevent further land confiscation. Land without trees was considered unused land by the Israeli authorities and could be confiscated. NGOs were called upon to support the establishment of an international fund to advance the olive trees project. Regarding the management of the fund, it should be run by a committee of six members, three Europeans and three Palestinians. This would contribute to the work of the olive trees project.

36. Mrs. Blandine Destremeau (France), said that the purpose of her presentation was to report on the campaign launched by Al Haq on the reunification of Palestinian families. ECCP had given its support to this campaign. Tens of thousands of Palestinian families had been forced to separate because of Israeli policies forbidding them to live together permanently in the occupied Palestinian territories. Those affected were the people who had fled

or had been away from the occupied territories in 1967; residents of the West Bank married to non-residents; children born of a resident and a non-resident and who could not live in the occupied territories after the age of 16; and all those whose identity card was withdrawn, for example, when they travelled abroad.

37. Israelis considered permanent residency in the occupied territories and the holding of an identity card certifying this status to be a privilege and not a right. The Israeli military law did not mention formal procedures for family reunification requests. In practice, such requests were granted only on a very restrictive basis. In applying this type of policy, the Israeli authority had deported people on a regular basis, either individually or en masse.

38. In this context, Al Haq had launched an international campaign to draw the attention of the public and the media to this matter. The objectives of this campaign were to encourage the European Governments to take this matter into consideration with regard to their relationship with Israel; to heighten public awareness of important aspects of the Palestinian question, including humanitarian, legal, and political issues; to persuade the Israeli authorities to publish in detail the criteria for evaluating the request for reunification; to guarantee that those requests be considered case by case; and to press the Israeli authorities to modify their policy and abide by international standards. Within the context of this campaign, concrete actions had been taken, such as the creation of a database and the publication of documents on the situation. Her organization had provided for sponsorship of Palestinian families by French families. She said that her organization faced many obstacles due, inter alia, to limited resources, whether in specialized personnel or funds.

III. CLOSING STATEMENTS

39. Mr. Bernard Mills, Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, said that conferences of this type were important. He said that when considering the programme for 1993, some alterations would have to be made in order to allow greater discussion on matters of substance in the final declaration and also on workshops. All European NGOs participating in the Symposium had made an extremely important contribution to the Palestinian cause.

40. H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, said that much had been achieved during these two days of intense debate and that the numerous activities which would be undertaken as a result would make an important contribution to the achievement of common goals. The Committee attached great importance to the role of Europe in the peace process, and counted on the involvement and support of the European NGO community in mobilizing public opinion and influencing governmental policies in a positive direction.

41. Many developments had taken place during the year, which had given rise to great hopes. This was a time to exercise flexibility while intensifying all efforts in support of the Palestinian people. The task ahead was a difficult one, but with combined support and efforts, progress would be achieved. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People would continue to cooperate with all NGOs and support their work as much as possible.

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Annex I

DECLARATION ADOPTED BY THE SIXTH UNITED NATIONS EUROPEAN NGO SYMPOSIUM ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

1. We, the non-governmental organizations participating in the Sixth United Nations European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, held at the Palais des Nations at Geneva on 24 and 25 August 1992, reaffirm our commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East and to support the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, rights of return and the right to a Palestinian State.

2. At the same time, we are conscious that we are meeting at a time when the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has entered a new phase owing to two significant events - the peace talks which have been going on since October 1991 and the recent Israeli elections which have brought to government the Labour Party.

3. We note with dismay that although ten months have passed since the peace process was initiated at Madrid, no concrete progress was made, not least because of the then Israeli Government's intransigence and stalling tactics, during both the bilateral and the multilateral talks. We are, furthermore, concerned about the present Israeli Government's position on settlements. On this very day as we are meeting here, the talks are being resumed at Washington. The current Israeli delegation is under obligation to the Palestinians and the whole international community to show its good faith in negotiating on the basis of all United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the specific terms of reference contained in the letters of invitation to the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

4. We consider the current peace talks to be a step towards the settlement of the Middle East issue. We are dissatisfied with Europe's and the United Nations' marginalization during the peace process and stress the need for active participation by the United Nations and European countries. We believe that the official participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as the sole legitimate representative and guarantee of the unity of the Palestinian people in the present peace process, is essential. We believe that in the end a just, comprehensive and lasting peace can fully be achieved through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as stated in the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. We request the PLO to continue to provide relevant information on the current negotiations to help alert and mobilize European public opinion.

5. We welcome the Israeli Government's declaration of intent, on the eve of the present Washington talks, to release 800 prisoners and to stop (for the time being) deportation of Palestinians from the occupied territories. At the same time, however, we point out that the policy of arbitrary arrest and detention without trial and of deportation of individuals from the occupied territories has not been abrogated, and is contrary to human rights and the specific prohibitions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We deplore the continuing repression of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories. The killing and injuring of civilians, collective punishment and the sealing and demolition of houses, arbitrary arrest, detention and imprisonment without trial, expropriation of land and water resources, curfews, and restrictions on the free movement of Palestinians are not in line with the spirit of any peaceful solution. Such practices can only continue to create a climate of frustration and pessimism instead of one of confidence building. We once more strongly voice the need for international protection of the Palestinian people and request our respective Governments to initiate action now. The Security Council cannot continue to ignore its responsibility in this matter, particularly after the recent decisions taken concerning other areas in the world. The violation of principles of the Charter of the United Nations by Israel must be handled in a comparable way. The protection of the population in the occupied Palestinian territories obviously demands the sending of United Nations monitors and the replacement of the Israeli army of occupation with a United Nations peace-keeping

force. We shall press our Governments to promote such a decision in the United Nations. It is the prime duty of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention which, under article I of the Convention, are required to ensure that it is complied with.

6. We denounce the Israeli settlement policy in the West Bank and Gaza and the increased settlement activities in East Jerusalem as illegal and in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and, specifically, of Security Council resolution 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980. We strongly protest against the United States Administration's decision to grant Israel the ten billion dollar housing loan guarantees without, apparently, any pledge from the Israeli Government that it will cease building settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. All settlements are illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention. These actions by the United States and Israeli Governments, particularly during the current peace talks, represent a serious challenge to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to the international community, which reject all attempts at demographic change and the transfer of population by the occupying power to the territory it occupies. We call upon European Governments not to donate or pledge any financial or other support to Israel until it officially pledges to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, Jerusalem included.

7. We invite all NGOs to campaign for a just solution of the Palestinian refugee problem based on the right to return, the principles of which are embodied in General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948, which derives its force from the consensus behind it, since even the United States voted in favour at the time. Moreover, Israel was admitted to the United Nations only after having accepted resolutions 181 (II) of 1947, regarding partition of Palestine, and 194 (III). The latter states: "the General Assembly resolves that refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not wishing to return". At the recent multilateral talks at Ottawa even the United States reaffirmed its agreement on this.

8. We are concerned about the concentration of weapons in the region, including chemical and nuclear weapons, and deplore the lack of progress made in the first multilateral meeting on security in the Middle East, where Israel's nuclear potential was not even addressed. We express our resolute support to the Israeli peace forces who are fighting for the dismantling of nuclear weaponry in their country. We urge all European NGOs to support and assist all Israeli NGOs in favour of a Palestinian State beside Israel.

9. In concentrating on the occupied Palestinian territories, we at the same time call attention to the ongoing discrimination against Arab-Israelis. Present practices of the Israeli State deprive them of their full human and civil rights.

10. We wish to reaffirm our stand and proposals regarding all aspects of the Palestinian issue as expressed in the final declarations of our 5 previous symposia and express our frustration that, during the 25 years of Israeli occupation few concrete measures have been taken by the European Governments to address this issue, despite the numerous activities of European NGOs which contributed to creating a greater awareness of the situation and to mobilizing indispensable support for the Palestinian cause.

11. While we commend the activities and initiatives undertaken since last year's Symposium by ECCP and its secretariat at Brussels, we consider that it needs stronger moral and material support from all European NGOs in order to carry out its work with more success during the second year of its mandate. We also call upon the United Nations to offer every possible assistance to the ECCP and its secretariat.

12. We are firmly convinced that actions are stronger than words; thus, on returning to our countries, we shall disseminate the present Declaration in the widest way possible, but most importantly we shall present it to the competent people in our own Governments and request that they take effective and concrete measures for the implementation of our proposals. Today more than ever before, the Palestinian people need our support and we shall spare no efforts to meet their aspirations through concerted and coordinated actions between NGOs. Immediately after the end of the Brussels Conference on the theme "Palestine: Development for Peace", ECCP will

submit another project to the Commission of the European Communities concerning the establishment of a database in our office at Brussels. We believe that such a project will facilitate the receiving and dissemination of information in a up to date and professional way, with the aim of better monitoring the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and coordinating common action.

13. We deeply regret that, in spite of various declarations issued by the European Community in favour of a just settlement of the Palestinian issue, no move has been made towards the recognition of the Palestinian state. Such a move would give a boost to the peace process and allow Europe to carry out a policy other than that of the United States. We urge all European Governments to bring pressure to bear on the Israeli Government to comply with all United Nations resolutions relevant to the Arab-Israeli conflict. We also urge them to support the transitional arrangements presented by the Palestinian side at Washington on 3 March 1992. Israel's dependence on the European markets and European assistance can make such pressure effective. Such a policy would serve the interests of both the European Governments and the European peoples.

14. We thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this Symposium and we extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé as the new Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We seize this opportunity to pay tribute to the hard work of H.E. Ms. Absa Claude Diallo, his predecessor, and wish her full success in her new appointment. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Secretariat and the interpreters for having contributed to the success of our meeting.

15. We request the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey the present Declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session as part of the Committee's report. We also urge the Committee to convene the next European NGO Symposium in the first week of September 1993.

Annex II

WORKSHOP REPORTS

Workshop I: Lobbying of Governments and parliamentarians

Moderator: Maria Gazi
Resource Person: Jean-Michel Dumont
Rapporteur: Paul Hoffman

1. Workshop I met in the afternoon of 24 August. The subject was introduced by a presentation from the resource person, Jean-Michel Dumont of the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation (PAEAC), on "The Lobby on the Palestinian Question within the European Parliament". His analysis of the changing role of parliaments and parliamentarians in the setting of foreign policy (more recently, and additionally, through the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Council of Europe and of the Western European Union and, most recently, through the Parliamentary Assembly of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), his review and analysis of actions since 1988 touching the Palestinian issue by the European Parliament, and his proposals of principles for practical general lobbying of and by parliamentarians, i.e., the practice of political persuasion, led to a lively and, in part, controversial discussion.

2. The workshop agreed that thee has been too little information made available by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in lobbying (a) to ECCP, (b) to their sister NGOs, (c) to PAEAC and, therefore, far too little coordination of effort also with Palestinians. If there had been better coordination in the past, there would have been better or easier results. It was agreed that ECCP, in cooperation with PAEAC, had a special responsibility for the sharing of information and the enabling of coordination efforts.

3. Some NGOs expressed skepticism about lobbying efforts and their effectiveness, concentrating preferably on raising the awareness of the public about the morality and justice of the Palestinian cause and expecting the public to exercise pressure on Governments and parliamentarians. Those actually involved in lobbying efforts argued for realistic targeting of parliamentarians on specific issues related to specific parliamentary decision-making affecting policy towards Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. Differences on this point did not prevent lengthy discussion of the practical points of lobbying, however.

4. It was agreed that each NGO, especially those concentrating on government and parliament lobbying, should maintain up-to-date lists of the names and addresses of their national and European Members of Parliament and Members of European Parliaments (MPs and MEPs), especially those members of national parliaments who are members of the foreign affairs committee of their respective parliament and of the parties represented in parliament and of those who are delegates to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, especially of those who sit on the Political Committee and its subcommittee on Human Rights.

5. At the level of the European Parliament, it is especially necessary for such NGOs to have available the names and addresses of their national representatives on the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee of the European Parliament.

6. One of the observations made which should be of concern to NGOs engaged in lobbying on the Palestinian issue is that there is no coordination in foreign policy matters, and no contact, in fact, between the individual national parliaments and the European Parliament. NGOs in cooperation with ECCP can play an important supportive role in lobbying by working closely with PAEAC.

7. Note should be taken of the various EC bodies other than the European Parliament which actually or potentially are engaged in the Palestinian issue at various times while dealing with foreign and economic affairs: the European Commission; and the Council of Ministers under the respective six-month presidency which revolves among the 12 EC member States, which meets at least twice during each presidency (four times a year). Furthermore, there is the EC-Israel Cooperation Council which meets every six months in Brussels at the ministerial level. It was agreed that ECCP and PAEAC will inform all European NGOs about issues being focused on at the moment.

8. Sharing of information on lobbying efforts, including the issue of timing, will enable avoidance of duplication and greater coordination of effort and will assure greater effectiveness of the measures adopted. Each NGO engaged in lobbying, and even those not normally engaged in lobbying, should be kept abreast of the opportunities for lobbying which upcoming decisions to be taken by the various decision-making bodies afford (for example, upcoming proposals involving agreements with Israel).

9. It was also agreed that when there are national or European general elections and during the election campaigns, parties and candidates should specifically be asked about their attitudes towards the Palestinian question in general and towards specific issues, and be pressed to respond regarding what they intend to do about the matters in question.

10. With regard to measures involving political and economic pressures on Israel - though some felt that this would not be effective - it was pointed out that such measures, if they are realistic and effective, should be intended to help Israel towards peace with the Palestinians. At the present time, Israel's desire to associate with the emerging "European Economic Area" (EEA), which is to be the economic union of the EC and the member States of EFTA, offers a unique opportunity, through Israel's having to negotiate with each EFTA country and with the EC, to press home to Israel that any new preferential trade agreements will depend on Israeli implementation of United Nations resolutions on the Palestinian and peace questions.

11. Following M. Dumont's eight practical principles concerning lobbying on the Palestinian issue, there was the following agreement:

(a) Action to be taken should, if possible, involve members of all political parties.

(b) All requests for specific action should be reasonable and be aimed at a specific goal.

(c) If several groups are lobbying to pursue the same goal, there should be perfect agreement among them, including if possible agreement on a distribution of tasks so as to best utilize the available means.

(d) In case of a draft resolution, it is advisable to have a precisely drafted proposal involving all essential points, which can serve as a basis for parliamentarians of different sensitivities, leaving to the parliamentarians themselves to try, if they wish, to make the text more radical. (N.B. It was agreed that the term "minimal proposal" used in the original presentation, page 4, "fourthly", was misleading.)

(e) There ought to be a strong chance that the action proposed will succeed.

(f) Taking action will be all the more simple and assured of success if the coordinator of the effort in question has been able to gain the confidence and respect of those whom he is seeking to persuade.

(g) Work of political persuasion must be done with a long-term view, which means that contacts should not be maintained with decision makers only in critical periods.

(h) Sight must never be lost of the fact that the most effective work is never done at the last minute.

12. It was also pointed out that two parallel paths, embarked upon at the same time, give the greatest assurance of success: (a) the respective NGO addresses the respective parliamentary body and its members officially, and (b) individual members of supporters of the NGO address the respective members of parliament personally and directly, without mentioning their affiliation.

13. Considerable disagreement was evoked by the presentation's statement that "the telling arguments" for parliamentarians and Governments are those linked to "Europe's interests", "moral grounds" merely following "afterwards", "interest" being "the greater incentive for practical action". On this there was no agreement, but it was accepted that justice, respect for human rights, Middle East peace, good relations between Europe and its Arab neighbours and concern for economic cooperation in the Mediterranean region should act as incentives for Europeans and European Governments and institutions to try, for their part, to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Israeli conflict as the core issue of peace in the Middle East.

14. On the other hand, most participants in the Workshop expressed their frustration not only at the lack of progress during the first 10 months of the current negotiations initiated by the United States and the former Soviet Union, which began at Madrid at the end of October 1991, but at the whole process which seems to have been intended to marginalize the United Nations, the Palestine Liberation Organization and Europe, with respect to the process. Some emphasized the dangers entailed in this process which, in fact, undermines effective lobbying for the Palestinian cause in Europe.

15. However, the view which prevailed maintained that there was very much that Europe, European Governments and parliamentarians could do in the "new situation" created by the current negotiation process and the outcome of the recent Israeli elections to foster and strengthen the Palestinian cause even during the current negotiations.

16. With regard to the content of European lobbying at this time, there was agreement that European interests, political and economic, be carefully assessed. The effect of the standing protocols which the State of Israel should be reviewed and their implementation monitored by parliamentarians, especially to make sure that settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories do not benefit by them, and control be exercised over how the agreed-upon protocols are actually being carried out.

17. In any lobbying efforts, the following principles should be maintained:

(a) For all European NGOs involved in lobbying on behalf of the Palestinian cause, it is important that Israel and Europe respect and implement the principles embodied in all relevant United Nations resolutions touching the Palestinian issue. This means, concretely, recognition of the national rights of the Palestinian people, its right to self-determination and to an independent Palestinian State, the right of return or compensation (General Assembly resolution 194 (III)), recognition of the necessity for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967 (Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973)), which also form the basis in the invitations to the current negotiations, recognition of the illegality of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories (Security Council resolution 465 (1980)), and of the illegality of changes in the status of Jerusalem (Security Council resolution 478 (1980) and insistence upon full respect for and Israeli compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. These things can and should be done parallel to and during the current negotiations.

(b) Despite much skepticism among some NGOs, it is to be deemed wise and good use of an historic opportunity for European NGOs to engage themselves and their governmental and parliamentarian counterparts in an ongoing appraisal of the current negotiation process in a critical and constructive manner, using as yardstick the salient United Nations resolutions.

18. This means in particular:

(a) Lobbying - political persuasion of European Governments and parliamentarians - must involve close scrutiny of all proposals for Palestinian self-government. European Governments and parliamentarians should themselves insist that any elections for a legislative Palestinian assembly are, in fact, free and involve internationally supervised national elections for a transitional period which could actually lead to independence.

(b) We who lobby for Palestinian rights should welcome the release by Israel on the eve of the current phase of talks of a significant number of Palestinian prisoners wilfully detained without trial. A larger number, however, are still detained. And the instruments of wilful killings and injuries are still in place and are still in use. European Governments and parliamentary bodies should be made aware of the fact that this very time there is a need for the European States as High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention and for relevant United Nations bodies to monitor the situation and to press for international protection of the Palestinian population under Israeli occupation.

(c) While we also appreciate the new Israeli Government's declaration of a freeze on political settlement in the occupied Palestinian territories, forceful objection, through active lobbying by NGOs, must continue to be made to the whole past policy of Israel's expropriation of Palestinian land and the establishment of Israeli settlements, as well as to the current Israeli distinction between political and "security" settlements. It must be pointed out in our contacts with government leaders and legislators that the settlements, contrary to international law, remain, that the policy and the basis for the Israeli policy, according to Israeli legal justifications, have not been abrogated, that without Palestinian control over land and water resources in the occupied Palestinian territories, "Palestinian autonomy" remains devoid of force, that Israeli settlers in the occupied Palestinian territories have been placed under Israeli law, while the whole fabric of occupation law for the Palestinians remain intact, thus perpetuating discrimination, injustice and inequality under law between populations in the same territory. Moreover, maintenance of the settlements, even if eventually they are no longer allowed to expand, represents in itself territorial and demographic change by the occupying Power prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention.

(d) Lobbying on behalf of Palestinian rights must point out that maintenance of friendship between European States and Israel demands that Israel comply with the norms of international legality and legitimacy.

19. With regard to the present peace negotiations, we who involve ourselves in practical lobbying on behalf of the Palestinian cause, while recognizing the need that concrete steps must be taken, one at a time, to achieve the ends required, must not lose sight of the ends, and must insist that the steps to be taken are to be judged by the ends to be achieved.

Workshop II: Raising public awareness of the Palestine issue by European NGOs

Moderator: Bernard Mills
Resource persons: Nikolai Zdhanov, Roberto Giudici and John Gee
Rapporteur: Luisa Sirvent

Nikolai Zdhanov gave a basic legal background in his talk on "Double standards in international law and the Palestine problem". He stressed the necessity to seek implementation of international law concerning human rights on the Palestine issue.

Roberto Giudici focused on strategies concerning interests and participation and information. He argued for less general, more targeted work, directed towards those who might be interested, particularly in areas in which they had some personal involvement. Individuals or groups - for example, in a union branch - might establish contacts on a humanitarian basis, become more aware of the political issues involved, and draw others in. It was important to bring out a different version of the view than that of the mainstream media.

John Gee related some of the practical experiences British organizations had had, and dealt with issues such as how to make the most of a speaking tour or of parliamentary lobbying. He spoke about the tactics of work with the media.

Many contributions followed. It was generally felt that there was a danger of complacency resulting from the election of a new Israeli Government and the continuing peace talks. These provide no grounds for neglecting the issue of Palestine. On the contrary a special effort is needed to keep putting Palestinian rights on the public agenda and to counter any media attempts to put the Palestinians in a bad light by criticizing them for not responding to so-called Israeli concessions in the field of human rights.

Among suggestions made were those concerning:

(a) Organizing tours to the occupied Palestinian territories, whether by parliamentarians, community groups or individual members of the public. This would have a strong influence on them, though a view was expressed that the individuals who had gone in the past often found it difficult to put their experiences over to the public.

(b) The practical problems of faxing or mailing information from Palestine to organizations outside. It was suggested that the cost could be cut by one trusted organization in each country taking on the responsibility of passing information on.

(c) Relating to media, many problems were aired. It was important for NGOs to organize members to write letters to the editor, and to telephone television and radio stations to praise or criticize their programmes. The point was made that a particular effort had to be made with television stations as television is now the most influential part of the mass media. A stronger network was needed in Palestine to receive journalists. NGOs should themselves try to avoid falling into media traps - for example, they should speak more about Israeli colonies in the occupied Palestinian territories, rather than the more neutral settlements. Varying views were expressed concerning whether it might be right to use the term "Palestine" as a substitute for "West Bank and Gaza Strip".

(d) The People's Declaration. It was proposed that NGOs should cooperate on an all-Europe basis to obtain the signatures of prominent figures on a declaration which would reaffirm the principles set forth by EC Ministers in the Venice and Dublin declarations, and highlight the necessity for the Palestinians to be enabled to exercise their right to national self-determination, and for the PLO to be a full party, representing the Palestinians, in attempts to negotiate a peace settlement. Politicians, writers, musicians and religious figures might be approached.

(e) Encouragement of Europeans to work in the occupied territories just to be there and observe what is happening, not only to fulfil immediate material needs of the people.

(f) The current concentration on the West Bank and Gaza Strip should not result in the Palestinians inside the Green Line or in exile being neglected and forgotten.

(g) Effective pressures which might be put upon Israel to respect Palestinian rights. The United Nations machinery offers some possibilities, but it was important that NGOs should lobby their national Governments on the main issues and should seek the implementation of economic measures against Israel to persuade it to respect Palestinian rights.

(h) Negative portrayals of the Palestinian people in solidarity work. Showing them as helpless victims would not encourage respect for them or encourage a belief in their ability to run their own affairs.

The idea was expressed that in future, workshops might be split in two, with a first session for putting forward ideas, and another full session, with a smaller working team, to argue issues through and narrow proposals down to the best and most practical.

Annex III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

Participant NGOs

ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ARCI CULTURA E SVILUPPO (ARCS)
ARCIRAGAZZI
ASSOCIATION FRANCE-PALESTINE
ASSOCIATION MEDICALE FRANCO-PALESTINIENNE
ASSOCIATION POUR L'UNION ENTRE LES PEUPLES JUIF ET PALESTINIEN (AUPJP)
ASSOCIATION SUISSE-PALESTINE
BERLINER MISSIONSWERK
BRITISH REFUGEE COUNCIL
CENTRO INTERNAZIONALE CROCEVIA
CIMADE
COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ARAB-BRITISH UNDERSTANDING (CAABU)
DANISH PALESTINIAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS' UNIONS (FISE)
FILCEA CGIL
FINNISH ARAB FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY
FINNISH-PALESTINE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE
FRIENDS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (Freundinnen despalästinensischen Volkes e.V.)
GENERAL UNION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN (GUPW - UK BRANCH)
GREEK COMMITTEE FOR INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY
GRUPPO RICERCA MEDIO ORIENTE CONTEMPORANEO (G.R.M.O.C.)
INTERNATIONAL JEWISH PEACE UNION
INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR THE RIGHT AND LIBERATION OF PEOPLES
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (EAFORD)
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF JOURNALISTS
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS (IUS)
ITALIAN METAL WORKERS' FEDERATION (FIOM-CGIL)
LABOUR MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL
LIGUE INTERNATIONALE POUR LES DROITS ET LA LIBERATION DES PEUPLES
MEDICAL AID FOR PALESTINIANS (MAP)
MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (MECC)
(THE) MOVEMENT FOR AFRO-ASIAN PEOPLES' COOPERATION AND SOLIDARITY
NADJE E.V.
(THE) NORWEGIAN PALESTINE COMMITTEE
PALESTINE DEMOCRATIC ASSOCIATION
PALESTINE GROUP OF NORWAY
PALESTINE SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATION OF SWEDEN
PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION FOR EURO-ARAB COOPERATION (P.A.E.A.C.)
PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL
RUSSIAN SOCIETY OF AFRO-ASIAN PEOPLES' SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION
SALAAM RAGAZZI DELL'OLIVO
SPANISH NGO COMMITTEE ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE
UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF SWEDEN
WORLD FEDERALIST MOVEMENT (formerly WORLD ASSOCIATION OF WORLD FEDERALISTS)
WORLD PEACE COUNCIL
WORLD YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION (WORLD YWCA)

Observer NGOs

ABNAA AL-BALAD MOVEMENT
AL-FIKR AL-JADID RESEARCH CENTER
AL-HADAF CULTURAL FOUNDATION
AL-NAHDY MOVEMENT
(THE) ARAB ASSOCIATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (HRA)
ARAB JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION
ARAB LAWYERS' UNION
ASSOCIATION OF FORTY
ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S COMMITTEES FOR SOCIAL WORK IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
BEIT HANINA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY
BISAN CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
CENTRE D'ETUDES ARABES POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT
CONFEDERATION DEMOCRATIQUE DU TRAVAIL MAROC
DAR AL-ISLAM KHAIERAH
FRIENDS OF PRISONERS AND DETAINEES
FUND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE ARAB SECTOR IN ISRAEL (FIATT)
GENERAL FEDERATION OF LABOUR UNIONS
GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS
GENERAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (Chapter Tulkarem)
GENERAL PALESTINIAN UNION FOR CHARITABLE SOCIETIES - JERUSALEM
GENERAL UNION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN
HEALTH SERVICES COUNCIL
HOUSING RIGHT COMMITTEE (Division of Palestine Human Rights Information Centre)
IN DEFENCE OF CHILDREN UNDER OCCUPATION - CARE AND LEARNING
INFORMATIONSSTELLE PALASTINA
(THE) INITIATING COMMITTEE FOR DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF UPROOTED ARABS IN ISRAEL
JAFFA CENTER
MEDICAL AID FOR PALESTINE (MAP) CANADA
(THE) NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL CARE AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING
PALESTINE COMMITTEE FOR NGOs
PALESTINE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY
PALESTINE SOCIAL CONSOLIDATION FORUM-JERUSALEM
PALESTINE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE
PALESTINIAN FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S ACTION COMMITTEES (WOMEN'S RIGHTS PROJECT)
PANORAMA, CENTER FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF ALTERNATIVE INFORMATION
PATIENTS' FRIENDS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY
PROGRESSIVE LABOUR FRONT
UNION OF AGRICULTURAL WORK COMMITTEES
UNION OF HEALTH CARE COMMITTEES IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
UNION OF HEALTH WORK COMMITTEES
UNION OF PALESTINIAN MEDICAL RELIEF COMMITTEES
UNION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN
UNION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN NORTH AMERICA
UNION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL SERVICE (UNAIS)
WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS
WORLD MUSLIM CONGRESS

NGO Coordinating Committees

European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the question of Palestine

International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the question of Palestine

North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the question of Palestine

Palestine Committee for NGOs on the question of Palestine

Panelists and Workshop Resource Persons

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Blandine Destremeau
Jean-Michel Dumont
Maria Gazi
John Gee
Roberto Giudici
Hans Nebel
Meir Pail
Roger Stott
Nikolai Zhdanov

Members and observers of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations in New York and Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

H.E. Mr. Victor Camilleri, Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations in New York and Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

H.E. Mr. Victor H. Batiouk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations in New York

Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations in New York and Observer on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Mrs. Maha Khoury, Counsellor, Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations in New York and Observer on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

States Members of the United Nations represented by Observers

Bahrain
Belarus
Egypt
Germany
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Jordan
Philippines
Thailand
Tunisia
Ukraine
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Yemen

United Nations specialized agencies and bodies

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Intergovernmental organizations

League of Arab States
Organization of the Islamic Conference

Organizations having received a standing invitation to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly as observers

Palestine

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